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Adaptations

Dr. Sullivan

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Gone Girl

There's no doubt that David Fincher's film adaptation of Gillian Flynn's best selling novel *Gone Girl* was a box office blockbuster, leaving Rosamund Pike with a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role. And while spectators all over the country raved about how accurate the film stayed to the book, I found myself questioning why Gillian Flynn made certain changes to the film because she was the screenwriter, as well. I did love some of the changes that a cinematic adaptation allows, however, so my overall appreciation of the film through a cinematic lens was not marred by the alterations. All the actors involved and David Fincher created an incredible piece of art and Rosamund Pike absolutely deserved her nomination.

I found myself wondering why Gillian Flynn altered some of the scenes and even omitted some of the scenes involving Amy's past. For example, the story of Amy's high school best friend, whom she accused as being a stalker, is completely omitted from the film. It seemed to me that Flynn left out many details that pointed towards Amy's insanity and the fact that she's always been crazy, vindictive, and manipulative. It weakened Nick's case against her toward the end of the film. In the book, Nick worked very hard with Boney and Go to build a solid case with ample evidence against Amy, but eventually dropped it upon learning that Amy was

pregnant with his child. But this part of the book where Nick spends days and days trying to prove his wife's culpability is not even mentioned in the film. This undermines the strength and determination that Nick's character has and ultimately makes him look weak and powerless. The Nick from the book was almost as stubborn as Amy and was determined to turn the world against Amy and to show who she truly was. Yet in another instance, Flynn altered the story involving Tommy, to make Amy seem more vengeful. In the book, Amy dropped the rape charges she'd pressed against him, but in the film, Tommy gets convicted and becomes a registered sex offender even though the sexual intercourse was completely consensual.

My overall issue, however, is that both the book and the film got me incredibly riled up. I absolutely abhorred the storyline because it is maddeningly frustrating. In the book, I found the structure very choppy, switching perspectives far too often with chapters too short. But in the film, when I could see just how clinically insane Amy was, I wanted to scream out at the characters to just tell them to leave her behind. But what really made me angry was the fact that Nick's character was just as crazy to agree to stay with her at the end. If he'd just continued building his case against her with Go and Boney, he could have received full custody of their child and run away. It infuriated me that these two characters were going to stay together and ruin this child's life. While I realize that it is a fictional child, the message of the book just did not sit well with me. I'm usually in full support of unpredictable and unique endings that highlight how life really isn't a fairytale, I just did not appreciate the ending of *Gone Girl* at all.

Cinematically, however, David Fincher did some really amazing things with the book. The opening shot of Amy lying on Nick in bed that comes back at the very end of the film is such an incredibly haunting moment. While at the beginning, her eyes seem innocent, they seem to have completely transformed into evil and manipulation by the end, even though it is the exact same shot. The way that Fincher included the journal entries was also very interesting. Amy's voice was incredibly creepy and haunting throughout every entry. And almost every scene I had pictured in my mind seemed to somehow be exactly what David Fincher created on the silver screen. It was incredible just how accurately Fincher was able to transform the world of *Gone Girl* into reality.

Upon finishing the novel, I wanted to throw the book at the wall and upon finishing the film, I wanted to throw the DVD at the wall, so I suppose that is a relatively good sign. Flynn and Fincher both got a reaction out of me, and a quite strong one at that. I typically will judge a book based on my reaction at the end and I will admit that this story was a very unique one. I however will not add this book to my reread or the film to my re-watch list. The only character I actively liked was Go because of her unending support of Nick. Even when she had her biggest doubts, she still stuck by his side and did everything she could to help him, including spending her entire savings on obtaining Tanner Bolt as an attorney. But David Fincher definitely did the book justice in his adaptation; all the transitions from book to film were amazing and I definitely appreciated the film.